



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
International Peace Park
Biosphere Reserve
World Heritage Site

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Glacier National Park News Release

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Finding of No Significant Impact Signed for Administrative Flights

Flights to begin June 23

WEST GLACIER, MONT. -- Glacier National Park Superintendent, Mick Holm, today announced that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) on administrative flights in Glacier National Park during 2003 was signed by National Park Service Intermountain Region Deputy Director Mike Snyder on Friday, June 13. A copy of the finding will be available for viewing on the park's web site at www.nps.gov/glac/plans.htm.


According to Holm, during the 2003 season, a maximum of 102 helicopter and fixed-wing flights are authorized to occur in the park. Flights will be used to 1) remove waste from the toilet facilities at Granite Park Chalet and a nearby patrol cabin which do not operate effectively, 2) deliver supplies for the rehabilitation of Porcupine Lookout (an historic structure), 3) perform maintenance on radio towers in the backcountry and 4) conduct wildlife monitoring for research purposes.

More than two-thirds of the newly approved flights will be by helicopter. Approximately 34 of those are to remove untreated human waste.

Most of the flights will take place early in the season when there are fewer backcountry visitors. In addition, the planned flight paths are primarily over the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

Holm stated, "The approved flights are necessary to meet a variety of operational needs which provide visitor safety and resource protection." The EA originally called for 112 flights which were reduced to 102 in response to public comment. Holm further stated, "Every effort will be made to further reduce the number of flights wherever possible through the use of aircraft with greater capacity as well as using other means to accomplish the work."

"With regard to the composting toilets at the chalet, we are developing a long term solution. In the meantime, the park is evaluating a near term solution that may involve increasing the



number of units on site,” said Holm. The park is working with NPS engineering consultants to evaluate long term solutions including the feasibility of increasing the amount of introduced heat into the system to accomplish composting. Alternatively, the NPS is considering replacing the existing composting boxes with newly designed boxes that incorporate adequate warming technology and improved accessibility.

Another 30 helicopter flights will be used to ferry crews and supplies to the Goat Haunt area to rehabilitate Porcupine Lookout and install radio equipment. An estimated six to eight helicopter flights will be used for radio tower maintenance at Apgar, Scalplock and Swiftcurrent Lookouts.

The remaining 15-30 flights will be by fixed wing aircraft in order to monitor bald eagles, bighorn sheep, bull trout, Canada lynx, gray wolves, grizzly bears and wolverine.

In addition to the 102 flights approved in this finding, approximately 22 helicopter flights were previously approved. Those flights will take place over a two-and-a-half hour period in a single day in late summer or early fall. They will be used to pick up materials left over from the rehabilitation of the Logan Pass boardwalk trail and to deposit and pick up supplies and equipment for the rehabilitation of the water intake system at Sperry Chalet.

Administrative flights in Glacier National Park are expected to begin June 23rd.

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